

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 12 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Spinner, U.S. Patent No. 4,440,464. Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Majors, U.S. Patent No. 6,135,800. Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Spinner.

Claims 2-11, 13-15 and 19-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 2, 3, 13, 14, 18 and 20 have been amended. Claims 1, 12, 16 and 19 have been canceled. New claim 21 has been added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) to claims 1, 12 and 16

Claims 1, 12 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Spinner, U.S. Patent No. 4,440,464. Claims 1, 12 and 16 have now been canceled.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 12 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Spinner is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) to claim 17

Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Majors, U.S. Patent No. 6,135,800.

Majors describes an electrical connector having a female coupling assembly 104 having a threaded inner surface 150 and keyways 158. See col. 5, lines 45-67, and Figs. 6 and 7.

Claim 17 of the present application recites a union nut including an internal thread, "the internal thread having at least one threadless area." It is respectfully submitted that the threaded inner surface 150 of Majors does not have any threadless areas. In contrast, the

threaded inner surface 150 of Majors appears to be continuously threaded. The keyways 158 of Majors are designed to receive keys 182 of washer 174. See Majors, col. 5, lines 45-49. It is respectfully submitted that the keyways 158 of Majors are not part of the threaded inner surface 150, but rather are axially displaced and separate from the threaded area. See Majors, Figs. 6 and 7. It is respectfully submitted that Majors cannot anticipate claim 17 as this reference is missing at least the above-recited feature of claim 17.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Majors is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Spinner.

Claim 18 has now been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 19. It is respectfully submitted that claim 18, as amended, is therefore allowable.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Dinger Spinner is respectfully requested.

Allowable subject matter

Claims 2-11, 13-15 and 19-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Allowable dependent claims 2, 13 and 14 have now been rewritten in independent form incorporating the limitations of independent claim 1 and any intervening claims. Dependent claim 18 has now been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 19. Claims 1, 12, 16 and 19 have been canceled. Dependent claims 3 and 20 have been amended for agreement with their respective independent claims. It is respectfully submitted that independent claims 2, 13, 14 and 18, as well as their respective dependent claims, are therefore allowable.

New claim 21

New claim 21 has been added. New claim 21 recites "the internal thread of the union nut includes at least one threaded area matching the at least one threadless area and

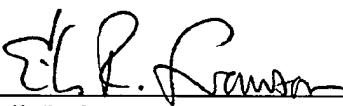
configured to be received by the at least one threadless area and tightened onto the external thread." Support for new claim 21 may be found, for example, at paragraph [0020] of the specification and Fig. 1. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added. It is respectfully submitted that neither Spinner nor Majors discloses an at least one threaded area matching the at least one threadless area and configured to be received by the at least one threadless area. It is respectfully submitted that new claim 21 is patentable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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